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THE BOSTON CUBIT.

In the Way Collection of Egyptian Antiquities, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass., is an old cubit measure of the XVIII dynasty. It is a scribe's or artist's palette of wood, length 15 inches, width $1\frac{1}{8}$, thickness $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. On the face, at one end, are three incisions for paints about one inch square. In the middle is a slot, undercut for the brushes. The edges of the paint-cups show much wear from use. Unlike some half a dozen others which lie beside it, one edge is scored with lines running crosswise at irregular intervals, apparently cut for the artist's convenience in measuring his work. I have carefully compared these intervals with the standard cubit as determined by Sir G. Wilkinson and Mr. W. M. F. Petrie, and the double-line scored cubits preserved in the Turin and Louvre Museums.

The Turin cubit is	20.611	inches.
The Louvre cubit is	20.591	"
The Nilometer cubit (Wilkinson) is	20.625	"
The Gizeh cubit (Petrie) is	20.632 $\pm$.01	"

The Turin and Louvre cubits are divided into 28 digits numbered from right to left. At the 15th digit a single line extends across the face of the rule, at the 24th digit a double line; thus dividing the rule into three unequal parts, a right hand section of 15 digits, a middle section of 9 digits, and a left hand section of 4 digits. But each of these 4 is longer than a digit at the right of the double line; strictly speaking, these 4 are not digits, but make the palm or hand-breadth of the cubit.

The value of the Boston cubit as a witness of the Egyptian standard of measures rests in the fact that its scored lines give the three principal divisions of the Turin and Louvre rules: viz. the hand-breadth, the middle or 9 digit section, and the right hand or 15 digit section. The first scored line on the Boston rule, at the handle end, is $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches from the end and marks the hand-breadth. The second scored line is $6\frac{2}{16}$ inches from the end and marks the 9 digit section. The space between these two lines is $55\text{--}16$ ths or $\frac{1}{6}$ of 20.625 inches. On the opposite end

of the palette a 2 digit space is scored off, also a 6 digit space. Three times the 2 digit space equals the 6 digit space, and one and one half times the 6 digit space equals the 9 digit space. The 9 and the 6 combined make the 15 digit measure of the Turin and Louvre rules. The 6 and 9 digit measures give a standard digit .72916 + inch. The full cubit 20.625, less the hand-breadth 3.125, gives a standard digit .72916 +, for the 24 digit section. A standard cubit constructed by the divisions scored on the Boston rule would be :

The hand-breadth				3.125	inches.	} 20.625
24 {	9 digit section	. . .		6.5625	"	
	9 " "	. . .		6.5625	"	
	6 " "	. . .		4.375	"	

The actual length of the Boston rule is $15\frac{1}{3} \pm .01$. Taking .72916 as a standard digit, the palette is equal to 20.625 digits, that is, it represents by its full length the standard cubit on the scale of one digit to an inch, while by its scored lines it gives the standard divisions of the full cubit, viz., the hand-breadth, the middle or 9 digit measure, and a 6 digit measure or one quarter of the 24 digit section. One other scored line marks a quarter digit.

The evidence is decidedly in favor of the opinion that the scored lines on the Boston rule are exact, according to the standard cubit of Gizeh as determined from actual measurement by Mr. Petrie, and the Nilometer cubit as measured by Sir G. Wilkinson. Although the scored lines may have been cut by the scribe or artist who used the palette, the harmony of the divisions indicates that they were cut by the standard cubit. It may justly be inferred from these facts that the Boston rule, being in exact agreement with the cubit of Gizeh and the Nilometer, is older than the rule of Turin or of the Louvre, if indeed it be not the oldest known cubit measure in existence.

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